A 7074

SHORT ACCOUNT

Of the BEHAVIOUR of

WILLIAM PICKWORTH,

From his CONDEMNATION to his DEATH:

In a LETTER from a Perſon who attended him often during that Time.

To which is annex'd,

HIS LAST SPEECH.

I boaſt his death, tho' cover'd o'er with guilt;
For guilt, not innocence, his life he pour'd.
YOUNG.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by H. GALBRAITH, and ſold by the Bookſellers,
M,DCC,LXXI.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WILLIAM PICKWORTH, Grenadier in the XXIId. regiment of foot, was condemned for Robbery and executed on the 25th of September laſt. On the day of his execution, a paper was publiſhed, with the title of his Dying Speech; which contained Chriſtian Knowledge and Experience, that in ſome infus'd doubts of its authenticity; but in others, excited wiſhes to be more fully inform'd concerning him.

A Perſon of undoubted veracity, well known in Edinburgh, and who had regularly viſited the Priſoner, in anſwer to Inquiries, of which theſe Doubts and Deſires were the cauſe, wrote the following Letter.

It was thought that the publication of it might have ſome tendency, (by the Divine Bleſſing), to manifeſt the Unſearchable Riches of the Grace of GOD:

And, with that hope and deſire, it now comes from the Preſs.

Edinburgh, 30th *Octr.* 1771.

BRITISH MUSEUM

DEAR SIR,

I Am very willing to gratify your desire, to be informed concerning William Pickworth, from his condemnation to his death. And altho' I am unable to relate every particular conversation that passed between us, at more than thirty different meetings; yet, I believe I can recollect enough, and many can inform you of more, that will convince you, that all the parts of his Last Speech were the genuine sentiments of his heart.

On the Monday before he received his sentence, I was inform'd that he had caused write a letter to Mr David Plenderlieth, (one of the Ministers of this city), desiring to speak with him. He was then in the country, and I was desired to tell him so; but, that Mr. Plenderlieth would see him when he came to town. This message I deliver'd on the day after he received his sentence, and at the same time took that opportunity of conversing with him.

He appear'd, though in great distress, eagerly to hear what was said. After some conversation, I enquir'd of him, If he could read; to which he answer'd, That neither he nor his fellow-prisoner could. I then thought that it was proper to read the Scriptures to him; because *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. x. 17. I began at the third chapter of the Romans, where the Apostle describes our state by nature, collects a number of passages from the Old Testament that illustrate it, and sets before us the Lord Jesus Christ, as the alone propitiation for the sins of the ungodly.—He gave particular attention.

I then read several other passages, particularly Rom. v. where our fall in our first father Adam is describ'd; and also, our rising again to reign in life with Jesus Christ thro' his obedience unto death. I then left him to meditate on these subjects. At parting, he entreated

me to ſee him again next day, which I accordingly did. I then proceeded to read Eph. ii. Gal. iii. 1 John i. & ii. and, after ſpeaking concerning them, I deſir'd him to propoſe any queſtion or difficulty that occurr'd to him. He ſeem'd to be well pleas'd, and thanked God, for having an opportunity of hearing theſe truths. He then told me, That a boy who had been priſoner in the tolbooth along with him, had read that paſſage in Gal. iii. 13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us; for it is written, Curſed is every one, that hangeth on a tree.* But neither he, nor the boy, underſtood what it meant. He therefore deſir'd me to ſay ſomething, concerning it to him. In anſwer to which, I endeavour'd to ſhew him, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was made a ſin-offering for us, that we might be made, the righteouſneſs of God in him. That he ſuffered the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us unto God, having made peace by the blood of his croſs. And that by his ſufferings and death, he hath remov'd our iniquities from us, as far as the eaſt is diſtant from the weſt; according as the Prophet had foretold, that he ſhould *remove the iniquity of that land in one day*, Zechar. iii. 9. And that it is hence, that GOD is *juſt*, in juſtifying the ungodly, that believe in JESUS. He expreſs'd great ſatisfaction, and ſaid, that "It was wonderful loving-kindneſs, that "God ſhou'd be pleas'd, to ſend his beloved Son, to "die for ſuch wretches—vile as he; who had been an "enemy to GOD all his lifetime: had been following "his own wicked courſes, and diſhonouring GOD." He expreſs'd great ſurpriſe at his long ſuffering, in that he had not ſent him to the bottomleſs pit where there is no hope of ſalvation.

I afterwards found, that he had been meditating upon what I had read to him; and I began to perceive, that the Lord, who open'd the heart of Lydia, was, by his word and Spirit, opening his underſtanding, to underſtand the ſcriptures, and to take the comfort ſet before him in them.

At one time when I went to ſee him, the iron bolts and

and bars with which he was bound, reminded me of that which is written Iſaiah lxi. and the interpretation of that prophecy by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in the ſynagogue at Nazareth, recorded, Luke iv. 18, 19. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor; he hath ſent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* I told him, That our Lord makes it evident, by what is ſaid in the following part of the chapter, that it refers entirely to himſelf, who is the great Preacher of righteouſneſs, and the declarer of the Father's name to the brethren. And then, I obſerved to him, the love of God in ſending his beloved Son into the world to lay down his life for us,—to ſuffer the ſhameful death of the croſs, to deliver us from the curſe of the broken law, to ſet us free from ſpiritual bondage—looſing the bands of ſin and Satan, that we might enjoy the privileges of the ſons of God.

I mentioned to him alſo, the love of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in coming chearfully to lay down his life for the ungodly, and the love of the Holy Spirit, who, by *the Truth* opens the eyes of our underſtanding to ſee the glory of that great ſalvation; for without Divine Illumination, (I told him), we muſt for ever remain in groſs darkneſs.—Upon hearing theſe things, the Priſoner ſeemed to be much delighted, and ſaid, "It was wonderful that God ſhould manifeſt his love and mercy to ſuch wicked creatures as we are."—I then told him, that God delighted to ſhew mercy, and had promiſed that *mercy ſhould be built up and eſtabliſhed for ever*, Pſ. lxxxix. 2. and in a conſiſtency too with ſtrict juſtice, ſince Chriſt ſuffered the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to GOD, and that it is witneſſed concerning him, that he hath magnified the law and made it honourable, and brought in an everlaſting righteouſneſs, in which all the ſeed of Iſrael are juſtified and ſhall glory.—I then ſpoke a few things with reſpect to the freedom of this ſalvation, and that it is all of grace that no fleſh may glory in

his

his preſence: To confirm this, I read Iſaiah xlvi. 12, 13. *Hearken unto me, ye ſtout-hearted, that are far from righteouſneſs. I bring near my righteouſneſs; it ſhall not be far off, and my ſalvation ſhall not tarry; and I will place ſalvation in Zion for Iſrael my glory.*

I then told him, that theſe glad tidings followed us, as a *word* behind us, ſaying, *This is the way, walk ye in it,* Iſa. xxx. 21. and mentioned that other paſſage, Iſa. lxv. 1. *I am ſought of them that aſked not for me: I am found of them that ſought me not: I ſaid, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* From whence, I ſaid to him, It appears that GOD firſt ſeeks after us, and remembers us in our low eſtate, before we enquire after him. To which he made the following anſwer, "I am perſuaded that I am ſtout-hearted, and far from righteouſneſs. An inſtance of which, I will give you, *viz.* I once lay ſixteen weeks in a fever, all which time, I do not remember, that ever I call'd upon GOD; ſurely this was great rebellion in me, and ignorance of the true GOD, and his dear Son our Saviour; but ſince it has pleas'd the Lord to open my eyes, and to give me ſome diſcernment of his abundant mercy towards ſuch helpleſs ſinners, I find pleaſure in calling upon his name." I then aſked him, What ſenſe he had of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin? He told me, "He was aſham'd, becauſe it was done againſt GOD, and was the cauſe why the Lord Jeſus was brought to ſuffer that ſhameful death of the croſs."—He ſaid, "He was ſorry that he had ſo long blaſphemed the name of GOD and of Chriſt."—I then aſked him, What he thought of theſe crimes for which he was to ſuffer? He anſwered, "That indeed they were very great and that the Lord knew that his heart was the worſt thing about him,—that it was full of wickedneſs."—I aſked him alſo, What was his diſpoſition with reſpect to the Crown Evidence?—He ſaid, "He indeed had ſpoken ſeveral things againſt him and his wife, that were not true; but he hoped that the Lord would convince him of the evil of his way; he added, That it was his duty to pray for him, and to forgive him, as he

expected

expected forgiveneſs of GOD for himſelf; he then thanked the Lord, that he had been pleaſed to bring him into priſon, had ſtopt him in his evil courſe, and had now turned the priſon into a place of liberty." He then began to be very familiar with me, and to propoſe queſtions; one of which was, "Do you think that I "have any reaſon to be afraid of death?" To which I anſwer'd, That death was called the King of Terrors and a terror to princes, Job xviii. 14.; Pſ. lxxvi. 12,—that death was to us an untrodden path, and therefore, we were ready to ſhrink at the thoughts of walking in it, but that if we believed the goſpel, we had no real cauſe of fear; becauſe death was aboliſhed by the appearing of our Lord, He, having deſtroy'd death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil; ſo that altho' believers in Jeſus Chriſt are not exempted from *natural* death, yet they are deliver'd from the *ſecond* death, and have reaſon to hope for the reſurrection of the body to reign in endleſs life with Chriſt. Death therefore, only opens to them a paſſage into the immediate preſence of our great Redeemer, where the ſpirits of juſt men are made perfect.

Another of his queſtions was in theſe words, "What "is meant by the burnt-offering?" I read Pſal. xl. 6, 7, 8, verſes, and led him from thence to Heb. x. and obſerved to him, that the Apoſtle ſhews that all theſe offerings and ſacrifices were ſhadows of good things to come, and had their full meaning and accompliſhment in Chriſt: And, I particularly told him, that as the people of Iſrael had a part in theſe ſacrifices, (Lev. iii. 11. & vii. 11.) the Lord himſelf a part, (Lev. ii. 9, 10. & vii. 9, 10.) and the prieſts their portion. So in the ſacrifice which Chriſt made of himſelf, the Father is well-pleas'd, the great Offerer delighted in doing the Father's will, and the ſaved people, made everlaſtingly happy in the communion of that ſacrifice with the Father and the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, (ſee John vi. throughout.) I then thought it was neceſſary to deſire him to join in prayer: He at firſt ſhewed ſome reluctance: For, ſaid he, "I am a poor, ignorant, ſinful

"wretch,

" wretch, and may expreſs myſelf in words that wou'd " offend the Lord." To that, I replied, That it was a commanded duty, *If any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of GOD, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not*, James i. 5. And I endeavour'd to encourage him by ſeveral ſimilar paſſages. He then acquieſced, and prayed, in ſubſtance, as follows: " O Lord, " I am a poor, ſinful, helpleſs creature, but thou haſt " ſaid, thou will teach the ignorant: I beg of thee " on my bended knees, that thou wou'd waſh away " my ſins in the blood of thy beloved Son, and ſave " me from crying, Peace, peace, to myſelf, till thou " cryeſt peace. O Lord, forgive all mine enemies, and " lay not my blood to their charge; and altho' I have " fallen at the bar of man, let me find mercy from " thyſelf, for thy beloved Son's ſake."

I took a pſalm-book with me at firſt when I went in, and read ſeveral Pſalms to him, he then attempted to read a few words; for, at the beginning, he only knew ſome letters, but, by cloſs application, he could make out ſome verſes of the xl. and xxiii. Pſalms, and at laſt he was able to read Pſal. cxxx. from beginning to end.

He was ſeveral times viſited by ſome Miniſters in the city, and other private Chriſtians; he expreſs'd very great thankfulneſs, and received them as from the Lord. —I remember one day, when I was in company with him, one of the Miniſters, (Mr. Robert Walker), came in, and, after expreſſing his concern for his ſtate and ſituation, he aſked him, If he could read; to which he anſwered, " He cou'd not read when he was brought to priſon, but now he had got ſome verſes of the Pſalms," particularly thoſe mentioned above; whereupon the Miniſter ſpoke many moſt agreeable things from Pſal. xxiii. ſuch as—That David's Lord was his Shepherd,—That he was the ſame perſon, who, in the New Teſtament, is called David's Son,—That he was alſo the Lord's Chriſt, and the good Shepherd who laid down his life for the ſheep,—That he would lead and feed them, and bring them at laſt to living fountains of water, &c. —He then aſked him, If he knew the uſe of an advocate:

date; and being anſwered by the Priſoner, That he did; the Miniſter told him, That Jeſus Chriſt is the righteous Advocate with the Father, and he obſerved, the great excellencies that appear in him beyond all thoſe who bear that name among men; for as a *fee* was the cauſe of *their* pleading, ſo *they* ſometimes did not regard whether their client gain'd the cauſe or no; but, with reſpect to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he pleaded their cauſe *freely*, without any price or reward, and he was in *earneſt* about it.—He then ſaid, That his character was JESUS, which ſignifies *The Saviour;* but that to it was added the epithet, *The Righteous;* becauſe his pleading for them, is conſiſtent with ſtrict juſtice, as he is the *Propitiation for their ſins.*—Another excellency, with regard to his pleading, he noticed, was the place where he is with the Father.—Theſe views from Pſal. xxiii. and 1 John. ii. 1, 2. were very comforting to the Priſoner.—I do not pretend to relate the *whole* of that converſation; but, (as far as I remember) the above is the *ſubſtance* of what paſſed at that time.

Another day, when I was preſent, Iſaiah liii. was read to him, as alſo Philip's explanation of that paſſage to the Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts viii.—Several excellent obſervations were made by another Miniſter then preſent, concerning the ſufferings of Chriſt; and alſo, the love of GOD, in laying our iniquities upon his beloved Son, who chearfully ſubmitted to the death of the croſs, that we might enjoy the Divine favour, and at laſt be brought to the full enjoyment and poſſeſſion of that glory into which Chriſt enter'd, after he had ſuffer'd. Theſe, and ſuch like obſervations were very joyful to the Priſoner. He ſaid, "That the Eunuch had indeed great "cauſe to go on his way rejoicing, ſeeing he was "taught, that Jeſus Chriſt was the Son of the Liv-"ing GOD."

I had occaſion to hear another Miniſter (Mr John Pattiſon) make ſome obſervations upon Luke xiv. 7,—25. I cannot pretend to give a particular account of all that paſſed; but theſe few things, I remember, he ſaid, *viz.* That Chriſt himſelf made this ſupper—That he himſelf

was the Feaſt—That his ſervants were the Apoſtles, and all the other preachers of the everlaſting goſpel—That thoſe who were firſt called to that ſupper, pretended excuſe, from things in themſelves lawful; but which ought to have been laid aſide, in order that they might embrace the call—That the Lord was angry with them; and threatned that they ſhou'd never taſte of his ſupper. He then, I think, proceeded to ſhew the abundant grace of GOD, in giving commiſſion to go out to call the miſerable that were in the lanes and ſtreets, without habitations to abide in;—he obſerv'd, That the ſovereignty of GOD appear'd in calling thoſe miſerable creatures, who were in the high-ways and hedges.—He ſpoke particularly on theſe words, *and yet there is room*: from which he drew many inferences, which tended to yield great comfort to the Priſoner; and, I remember, after the Miniſter was gone, he was much comforted with theſe words, *yet there is room*. He wondered much at the goodneſs of GOD in making room for ſuch a ſinner as him.

I had occaſion to ſee ſome other Miniſters, and to be preſent when they ſpake to him. I cannot pretend to give a particular account of what paſſed; only, I remember, that they ſet before him the free ſalvation that is in Chriſt Jeſus, and is beſtowed upon the chief of ſinners, without any works of theirs, and that this Jeſus, who ſuffered betwixt two thieves, was as able and willing to ſave *him*, as one of *theſe thieves*, and to bring him into paradiſe: So that whatever he had been, there was no room for him to doubt of the loving-kindneſs of GOD our Saviour. And that the more he ſaw his own vileneſs and ſinfulneſs in the ſight of GOD, the more excellency would he behold in the precious blood of Chriſt, which was ſhed even for the chief of ſinners. He expreſs'd great aſtoniſhment and wonder, that he had been priviledg'd to hear ſuch comfortable truths as theſe, and made the following reflection in theſe words, "O! how is it that the Lord hath been pleas'd to bring "me to this priſon to hear ſuch things! how is it, that "I, who was continuing in blaſphemy, drinking and o-

"ther

" ther crimes, was not permitted to rob alſo, when I " had a great temptation to it in my own country, " where I might have been taken and condemn'd with- " out hearing ſuch glad tidings as theſe! I cou'd have " expected *there* no more but one or two viſits from a " Clergyman."

He then made a pauſe, and broke out in theſe expreſ- ſions: " It is ſurely of the Lord, who wou'd not ſuffer " me to die, until he had firſt given me the knowledge " of his beloved Son, in whom I now truſt, that he is " my Redeemer and Saviour, and I hope to be ſoon re- " ceived into his preſence, where I ſhall ever praiſe him, " tho' in myſelf, I am a worthleſs creature, and de- " ſerving nothing but everlaſting puniſhment." Theſe, and the like reflections he often made.—His Know- ledge, and his love to GOD, ſeem'd indeed to encreaſe daily, ſo that the progreſs he made was ſurpriſing. He took particular pleaſure in the Pſalms, and made ſeve- ral obſervations on the paſſages he read and heard from time to time. I ſhall give you a few inſtances. Upon hearing Pſal. cii. 19, 20. *For he hath looked down from the height of his ſanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the priſoner, to looſe thoſe that are appointed to death*; he turned to his fellow-priſoner, and ſaid, " Theſe are great promiſ- " es and comforts to ſuch as you and me; how won- " derful is the goodneſs of GOD towards *us*, who " have been living in enmity and rebellion againſt ſuch " a prayer-hearing GOD, who looks after *us*, tho' " we have been running far from him."

Another time, Pſal. cxxx. 7, 8. being read, *Let Iſ- rael hope in the Lord, for with him mercies be: And from all his iniquities he Iſrael ſhall redeem.* He obſerved, that it was not only *one mercy*, that was mention'd; but *mercies*—that theſe mercies were *ever* to be found with God—and that he did not redeem Iſrael, or his people, from *one iniquity* only; but from *all their ini- quities*. Upon Pſal. cxviii. 5,—10. which was read in metre,

I in diſtreſs call'd on the Lord:
the Lord did anſwer me,
He in a large place did me ſet,
from trouble made me free.
The mighty Lord is on my ſide,
I will not be afraid:
For any thing that man can do
I ſhall not be diſmaid.

The Lord doth take my part with them
that help to ſuccour me:
Therefore on thoſe that do me hate
I my deſire ſhall ſee.
Better it is to truſt in God,
than truſt in man's defence,
Better to truſt in God, than make
princes our confidence.

He obſerv'd, that theſe words gave him great comfort, and were well ſuited to his preſent condition; for the Lord had heard him in his diſtreſs, and would continue to hear him for his beloved Son's ſake; and that he now found that it was *better*, yea, *much better* to truſt in the Lord than to truſt in princes, or in man's defence; "for, ſaid he, I hope the Lord will ſtrengthen me and not leave me in the time of my trouble; for he has been gracious to me, and I truſt he will continue to the end."—Upon Pſal. xxiii. he obſerved, "That ſince the Lord had promiſed to comfort with his rod and ſtaff, he had no occaſion to be afraid, even in the valley and ſhadow of death; for he truſted his whole ſalvation to the Lord his ſhepherd."——Several other obſervations of this kind he made on the Pſalms, which I ſhall not relate. ——I have given theſe as a ſpecimen of the reſt.

One day, when I was in converſation with him, he told me, That a perſon had brought him notice, that a paper was hawked about the ſtreets in his name, entitled, *Groans from the dungeon;* but he ſaid, He knew nothing about it; he entreated me to get a copy of it

to

to him.——This I accordingly did, and when I read to him the following words,

Tears with thy blood ſhall waſh me ſo,
And make my ſcarlet ſins as white as ſnow.

He ſaid, "Poor things! I never ſaid ſo to any one, for neither my tears, nor my prayers, can be of any ſervice to me; I truſt alone to the blood of JESUS for waſhing me, and I wiſh that the Lord may forgive them, for laying that to my charge."

Another day, when I was talking with him of the devices of Satan, he ſaid, "That all the while he was going headlong in the fulfillment of his luſts, he knew not what the meaning of temptation was.——But *now*, that the Lord had brought him to the knowledge of the truth, he found many temptations from the devil, which made him fall on his knees to GOD; And he found the Word of GOD to be ſtronger than the devil.—This led me to ſpeak of the ſpiritual armour mention'd Eph. vi.——That chapter was read to him.—He cauſed ſtop at theſe words, *for we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities and powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places*, and, turning to his fellow-priſoner, he aſked him, "What he underſtood by *the ruler of the darkneſs of this world?*—To which he replied, That he cou'd not tell.——He then ſaid, "Surely that is the devil, who has been ruling in me, and has led me on in theſe wicked courſes that have now brought me to this place."—He obſerv'd, at the ſame time, "That this was the firſt time he had heard that chapter read, and he thanked GOD, who had brought him out of the ſnare of the devil."

Another day, when reading to him the Parable of the Prodigal, he ſaid, "Surely that is I! for I have ſought "to fill my belly with huſks; but O! how great is the "Father's love to ſuch as me, to bring them home to "his own houſe!" He then made ſome obſervations about

bout *killing the fated calf, and making merry*, but I am not able at preſent to recollect them.

One morning, when I went to ſee him, he told me of a paſſage that Mr. Pattiſon had read to him the preceeding night, which, he ſaid, had been mighty comfortable to him all night; he mention'd a few broken words of it; but ſaid, "That it had now eſcap'd his memory, by his being employed in the morning, in ſinging and praying." I found the paſſage to be *that* in Jer. iii. 1. *They ſay, If a man put away his wife, and ſhe go from him, and become another man's, ſhall he return unto her again? ſhall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou haſt played the harlot with many lovers; yet return unto me, ſaith the Lord.* He immediately remember'd that to be the place, and was glad to hear it again; for, it appear'd to him to ſhew the exceeding greatneſs of the mercy and grace of GOD, to ſuch as he cauſed to return; "for, ſaid he, we cannot return of our-"ſelves, therefore it is all of free grace."

Upon being aſk'd, If he was afraid to die that ignominious death which awaited him? he ſaid, "He was not, when he conſider'd, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt was crucified betwixt two thieves, altho' he did nothing amiſs, to ſave ſuch miſerable creatures as he,—he added, That he did not deſire a pardon from an earthly prince; for, altho' he was to obtain it, he muſt ſoon die at any rate; all his deſire therefore was, to obtain a ſeal'd pardon from GOD, in whom he truſted, that he might enjoy his Redeemer, in that place where there is no ſorrow; for he now ſaw, by experience, that all things in this preſent world were vanity and vexation of ſpirit, and that even the riches of it were fading; but that the riches of Chriſt were unſearchable; he was willing therefore, to depart and be with Chriſt, which is far better; he added, That he had lived too long in ſinning againſt GOD, and that if his ſentence had been chang'd to baniſhment, it would have been a terrible thing to have returned to his former wickedneſs: He therefore thought it much better to be with Chriſt, where he would be ſecure from ſinning any more."—I acknowledge, that *that* converſation

converſation was moſt humbling to me, when I conſidered, that I had been for a long time making a profeſſion of love to Chriſt, and hatred of iniquity; but was ſo very much outſtrip'd by this man, who had but lately come to the knowledge of the truth, and yet had ſuch hatred to ſin.——I could not but obſerve the difference betwixt him and me, in that my ſins againſt GOD were committed after I had received illumination, while his were when he was in deep ignorance.—Indeed, had not GOD been pleaſed to reveal ſuch paſſages as theſe, *I will heal their backſlidings; I will love them freely; I will receive them graciouſly*; I ſhould be hopleſs.——I could not but recollect a paſſage in Mark x. 31. on this occaſion, *But many that are firſt, ſhall be laſt; and the laſt firſt.* Forgive me this digreſſion.—I ſhall now proceed to my narrative.

When the Priſoner underſtood that Mr. Plenderleith was come to town, he deſir'd me to call at him, and entreat him to come and viſit him, for he wanted much to ſee him. I obeyed his requeſt; and I accompanied Mr Plenderlieth, and had a very agreeable interview with the Priſoner.——I ſhall not pretend to give you a relation of what paſſed; but what he ſaid correſponded with what is mention'd above.—He exhorted him to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Saviour; to lay every thing of his own aſide;—not to truſt in his Repentance, his Prayers; or good Diſpoſitions;——but to ly at the feet of mercy, that the Lord might be glorified in ſaving him, and covering him with the garment of ſalvation, the robe of righteouſneſs prepar'd by the Brother-Ranſomer, who only was able and willing to fulfil that great undertaking, and put the whole family in poſſeſſion of the eternal inheritance.——He then pray'd with him, and left him at that time, with a promiſe to ſee him a few days after, which accordingly he did.—I was then preſent; He gave him very ſuitable exhortations as before; he deſir'd the Priſoner to pray; but, at that time, he declin'd it, ſaying, "I am very ignorant, and am not qualified to pray in preſence of men of underſtanding."—I told him, That it was the Lord only

only he had to do with;—That he was not praying to men, but unto God;—That he ought therefore, to pour out his ſupplications in agreeableneſs to the will of GOD, as he was enabled by the Holy Spirit;—and that, as he had no other name to mention before GOD, but the name of JESUS, ſo in *his* name, he had ground to expect an anſwer of peace.—He then agreed, and I muſt acknowledge, that he had much liberty in pouring out his heart.—We admired the grace of GOD in him, as it could *now* be ſaid of *him*, who before was a blaſphemer, BEHOLD! he prayeth!

Before I proceed any farther, I ſhall endeavour to collect the ſubſtance of ſome converſations that he and I had together about the nature of godly-ſorrow, and goſpel-repentance; and to give you ſome account of them.—He was lamenting, that he had liv'd ſo long a ſtranger to GOD, and to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, his beloved Son, thanking the Lord who had been pleaſed to reveal Chriſt, by his Word and Spirit unto him, and expreſſing his abhorrence at ſin, becauſe it was done againſt the holy and juſt GOD; when I took occaſion to ſpeak of the natural ſtate we are in, as the deſcendants of ſinful Adam.—I repreſented to him, That when our firſt parents ſinned in breaking the law of GOD, their communion with God was at an end *for that time*:—That they did not at all think of *returning* to the Lord, but ſewed fig-leaves to cover their nakedneſs; and, fearing *that* to be inſufficient, that they ſought to hide themſelves among the trees of the garden;—That the *conviction* of the tranſgreſſion they had been guilty of, had not *by itſelf*, power to bring them back to GOD;—and, I cou'd not help adding, That there is no doubt but they wou'd have continned in that ſtate of enmity, had not GOD been pleas'd, in his rich mercy, to give them the gracious promiſe of the *One Seed*, in whom all the families of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.—The belief of this promiſe I told him, was, I apprehended, what brought Adam from the ſtate of death he was in after the fall, to enjoy life and communion with GOD.—I then obſerved, that none of the ſinful

ful race of Adam are able to deliver themſelves from their natural ſtate of enmity and alienation from GOD; for, while they conſider'd GOD as their enemy, (which is truly the idea of every unconverted man awakned by the law, and not led forward to Jeſus Chriſt), they wou'd go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and thus continue to hold the weapons of their rebellion againſt God: *By the law is the knowledge of ſin—the law worketh wrath*, and is called by the apoſtle, *Adminiſtration of condemnation*.—I added, That when the Lord is graciouſly pleas'd, by his Spirit thro' the word, to lead the convinced ſinner to behold the whole law fulfilled by Jeſus Chriſt, who is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth; who hath magnified the law and made it honourable, and hath brought in an Everlaſting Righteouſneſs, in which all the ſeed of Iſrael are juſtified, and ſhall glory—that *then* indeed he will abhor himſelf—*then* he will obtain proper views of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, by beholding it condemn'd in the fleſh of Chriſt, ſubſtituted in room of the ungodly.—As this ſubject was moſt important in itſelf, and ſingularly ſo to him, I thought it proper to dwell very fully upon it; and, I remember, I read to him ſeveral paſſages of ſcripture that appear'd to me moſt fit to confirm and illuſtrate it.—I read to him in particular, Iſaiah lvii. 17, 18. where the juſt wrath of GOD againſt his people for their covetouſneſs and iniquity, and the effects of it, do not appear to have produc'd in them repentance and contrition.—On the contrary, it is ſaid, *That they went on frowardly in the way of their own heart*, but by the Lord's *healing them* and *reſtoring comfort to them* was *created the fruit of the lips*, Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. and xxxvi. 25—33. were alſo adduc'd, and it was told him, that Ephraim ſaid, *What have I any more to do with idols*.—ON THIS ACCOUNT that the Lord (from whom, becauſe of their baſeneſs, they might have expected evil and not good) had ſaid to them, *I will heal their backſlidings, I will love them freely, mine anger is turned away from him*, Hoſ. xiv.—It

was added, that the hiſtory of Simon, and the woman who was a ſinner, Luke vii. 41. and ſhewed, that love to GOD, (even where it *exiſted* was ever in proportion to the views we had of his love to us; and that from 1 John iv. 19. it was manifeſt, that it cannot even begin to exiſt, (nor conſequently any of its fruits, *viz.* Contrition, repentance, holineſs, *&c.*) until we firſt are acquainted with his love to ſinners, and perceive the manner of its expreſſion in the unſpeakable gift of his Son.—To all this he anſwer'd, "I thank the Lord that ſalvation comes in that way; were it not ſo, I never wou'd have ſought him."

As the time of his death was now drawing near, it was propos'd to him by ſome, to dictate an account of his life for publication; but he ſeem'd to decline it: However, one day when he and I were together, I ſaid to him, That as the Lord had been pleas'd in his great mercy to deal bountifully with his ſoul, I thought it his duty to let that be known to others, that thoſe who fear the name of the Lord, may glorify him for every new diſplay of the riches of his grace.—He then agreed, and ſpoke as follows, "You was the firſt that viſited me after I received my ſentence, and you know that all my comfort has ariſen from theſe precious truths, which I have heard from the holy Scriptures: I have laid open my heart to you in ſuch a manner as I have done to no man, except one gentleman, with whom I have been very free; I therefore deſire you to collect theſe truths together, and to give a ſhort account of my life, according as I ſhall relate to you."—Having heard his narrative, I got a copy of it made out, and read it to him: I then ſhew'd it to Mr. Plenderleith, who went with me to the priſon and read it over, and aſked him, If theſe were his own words and his meaning? to which he anſwer'd at the end of every paragraph, as Mr. Plenderlieth proceeded, *THEY ARE.*—Mr Plenderlieth then aſked me, If William had ſpoken to me of theſe paſſages; I told him, That he frequently had —The Priſoner then deſir'd me, to take notice in his ſpeech, of the

ſteps

ſteps of Providence in ordering it ſo, that he ſhould be apprehended and condemned here, where he had ſuch opportunities of hearing the goſpel of GOD's grace; which was accordingly done.—He alſo deſir'd, that *that* copy ſhould be ſhown to another gentleman who had been very friendly to him; but that he did not wiſh any alterations to be made in the ſenſe of the ſpeech.—I afterwards brought him back the exact copy, and read it a ſecond time, he approv'd of the whole, except one paragraph reſpecting the Crown-evidence, which the gentleman, to whom he had deſir'd it to be ſhown, had altered: He had ſtruck out theſe words, *As for any ſtretches Mills has made, I freely forgive him; for a man will do much to ſave his own life:* In their place, he inſerted the following words, *If Mills has wronged, or injured me, it is betwixt GOD and his own conſcience.*—When I came to that paragraph, the Priſoner ſaid, "I don't approve of that alteration, for theſe words make it doubtful whether Mills has injur'd me or not; ſo that the people who read this ſpeech, may ſay after I am dead, This man does not know whether Mills wrong'd him or not; why then does he pretend to forgive him, when he had done him no injury?—But, as I am certain that he ſwore falſely in ſeveral particulars, I deſire that the words may remain as they were at firſt, *viz. As to Mills, I freely forgive him for any ſtretches he made, for a man will do much to ſave his own life; I pray GOD that it may not be laid to his charge, and that he may find mercy of the Lord, for that and all his other crimes.*"—He then deliver'd the ſpeech to the printer, and order'd me to attend the preſs, that no additions nor alterations might be admitted.—He alſo deſir'd me to bring him a proof copy, and to read it, which I did the day before his execution.—He *then* declar'd himſelf well pleas'd with it, and that it was expreſſive of the language of his heart; after which in preſence of the inner-keeper and ſome other perſons he return'd it to me, to be carried back to the printer.

I have narrated this ſo particularly, that you may be fully ſatisfied of the genuineneſs of his ſpeech; and I

hope this account will be agreeable to you, as it is a ſimple declaration of matters of fact, and well known to Mr. Plenderlieth, and ſeveral other gentlemen.

When the time of his execution drew near, he was deſirous to know who were to attend him; but, as I con'd not then inform him, he ſaid, "If the Lord go with me, I ſhall not mind who go, I truſt he will not leave me at the laſt; however, it will be very agreeable to me, that ſome of thoſe Miniſters who have viſited me often, and underſtand me, and whom I alſo underſtand, attend me."—I then promis'd that I wou'd ſpeak to the perſons he had nam'd; they complied with his requeſt, which afforded him much ſatisfaction.

A few days before his death, one of the Miniſters, (Mr John Gibſon at Weſt-kirk), coming in to ſee him, ſeem'd to be greatly mov'd with ſympathy, and compaſion for him: The Priſoner perceiving it, ſaid, "O how is it, that the Lord's people ſhou'd expreſs ſuch care and regard for *me*, who have been ſuch an enemy to GOD?—Surely it is the Lord that has put it into the hearts of his people, and I thank the Lord for that, and all his other benefits beſtowed upon me."—It was about that time, that he earneſtly intreated me to viſit Hull, (who was a ſoldier in the ſame regiment and committed alſo for the ſame robberies) after his death, and to try if I could perſuade him to pray to the Lord, that he might enlighten him in the knowledge of the truth. *

I went

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* *An Anecdote, in which another Priſoner was concern'd, may be here related in a note.*

I was ſpeaking to Pickworth and him about prayer; The other priſoner ſaid, "We do indeed pray to God with a ſincere heart, and I hope the Almighty will hear us." Pickworth then ſaid, "Oh! do not ſpeak of the ſincerity of our hearts; for indeed our hearts are the worſt of us."—Methinks more may be ſaid for this ſentiment of the Priſoner's, than for one utter'd in a ſermon by a certain preacher, on a certain day of this month.—That

gentleman

I went to viſit the Priſoner again on the 22d. day of September, which was the Sabbath preceeding his execution.—I, as uſual, aſked him, How he found his mind? He anſwer'd me, "That he had great reaſon to return GOD thanks, who wonderfully ſupported him by his own Word; for, as the time drew nearer, he found himſelf ſtill more deſirous to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better," and then added, "This is the laſt Sabbath that I am to ſpend in *this* world; but before the next, I ſhall be in the preſence of GOD and my bleſſed Redeemer, in that place, where there is no ſin or ſorrow."—After that, I read to him the account of our Lord's reſurrection, and his

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gentleman ſaid, (as nearly as can be remembred), That the law of GOD is not rigorous.—That he hath ſuited its demands to our infirmity; and, as we are incapable of giving it a perfect obedience, he is graciouſly pleaſed to accept a ſincere, tho' imperfect one.—*Perhaps, this is an improper place, to intreat the Doctor, ſeriouſly to weigh, and anſwer the few following queries in the ſight of GOD; but his acknowledged politeneſs will, I hope, forgive the unſeaſonable addreſs; and the apprehended repugnancy of his doctrine to the ſcriptures, and common ſenſe, muſt juſtify it to others.—If the law of GOD then, is founded in the immutable nature and relations of things; can a Being of infinite knowledge and wiſdom, diſpenſe with it?—If conformity to it is bliſs, the want of it miſery; can a Being of perfect goodneſs, (by diſpenſing with it), permit his creatures to be leſs happy than they may be; or miſerable which they may not be?—If all* moral *imperfection is voluntary; can a Being perfectly juſt, by diſpenſing with immutable obligations, fail to puniſh the breach of them?—If Jeſus Chriſt came to magnify and eſtabliſh the law, and yet to ſave ſinners, by giving a ſincere and perfect obedience to it, and its penalty for them; can he be deem'd a preacher either of the law or the goſpel, who wou'd annihilate a jot of the one; or propoſe the leaſt ground of hope for ſalvation but the other?*

appearance

appearance to the disciples, and to Mary out of whom he had cast seven devils; and from thence observed to him, that Jesus Christ in the time of his personal ministry, admitted publicans and sinners to draw near to him, and preached (*i. e.* declared) to *them* the glad tidings of forgiveness;—That here he privileg'd Mary Magdalene with the first visit after his resurrection; and, calling her by name, gave her a commission to intimate the joyful tidings to the disciples, which were indeed but coolly received by them, until the Lord himself appear'd in the midst of them, saying, *Peace be unto you, be not afraid, it is I*, and shewed to them his hands and side, the dying marks of his everlasting love.—Then I shew'd him, that the Evangelist informs us, *the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord*.—Upon which, the Prisoner, with a chearful countenance, said, "They had great reason to be glad, since they had seen the Lord."—I observed to him, that Christ not only died and rose again; but is now exalted at the Father's right-hand, a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins;—That we are called upon, to trace him from the cross to the sepulchre, and from that to the Father's right-hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for the transgressors.—I then left him to meditate upon what he had heard.

I saw him again next day, and found his joy in the Lord increas'd: I desir'd him to join with me in prayer, as he had often done before, and was happy to find him still trusting in the Hearer of prayer for an answer of peace.—He was removed that night from the place where he had hitherto been confin'd, to a room prepar'd for him, where he was attended by two soldiers, and also some other persons, who spent that night with him, in reading the scriptures, and in prayer.—When I called next day, (being Tuesday), I found him continuing to hold steadfastly the faith that the Lord appear'd to have wrought in his soul, by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Towards the evening of that day, the Ministers who were to attend him to the place of execution, visited him,

him, prayed with him, and ſet before him many of the exceeding rich and precious promiſes, ſuitable to his preſent ſtate and ſituation: he ſeem'd to be well pleas'd.

He was then aſked by one of them, What gave him cauſe to think that GOD wou'd pardon him? He anſwer'd, "That GOD had ſent his beloved Son to die for us on the croſs, and had alſo ſaid, *He that cometh unto me, I will in no ways caſt out;* he ſpoke ſeveral things to that purpoſe, and repeated the words of Peter; *Lord to whom ſhall we go, but unto thee, for thou haſt the words of eternal life*, and bleſſed the Lord, that he had heard and been enabled to receive theſe truths.

I do not relate every thing that paſs'd between them.—I ſat up with him all that night according to his own deſire, and the others who were preſent, and we employed ourſelves in reading, and prayer to GOD on his behalf, that the Lord wou'd graciouſly be pleas'd to ſupport him in his laſt moments.—He went to ſleep about twelve o'clock at night, and ſleep'd till a quarter after four in the morning; then it was thought proper to awake him: when he got up, he ſaid, "My ſun is ſoon to ſet in this world, but it ſhall riſe in the other where I am going, and I rejoice that the time is ſo near."—I left him about ſeven o'clock in the morning, and did not return till eleven forenoon, when I found that he had been weeping: I aſked the cauſe—He anſwer'd, "My dear friend, my hope is not in the leaſt ſhaken, for I rejoice that the time draws ſo near, when I ſhall be admitted into the preſence of my Lord; but theſe tears proceed from my natural paſſions being mov'd by the priſoners who are coming about me, to bid me farewell: ſo do not be afraid, for my truſt in the Lord continues ſteadfaſt, and I hope he will ſupport me in my laſt moments."—He then told me of a particular circumſtance which he had not mentioned before, *viz.* That upon the day after he received ſentence, he had called for ſome ſpirituous liquor, and taken of it immoderately, ſo that he was render'd incapable at that time of employing his mind in a manner

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ſuited to his ſtate; reflections on that conduct filled his mind with horror, and made him put on a reſolution, that he wou'd not drink any more ſpirits or liquor, unleſs a glaſs of wine when he was quite exhauſted.—This accounted to me for the diſtreſs'd ſtate in which, I told you in the former part of my letter, I found him at my firſt viſit. Soon after this, the Miniſters who were to attend him, came in, gave him ſeveral exhortations and pray'd with him.—They then thought it proper to withdraw, that he might have ſome time by himſelf, and deſir'd me to call upon him within half an hour, and to ſtay with him till they return'd, if I thought proper; I did ſo; we two join'd in prayer: I then entreated him to take a glaſs of wine and a bit of bread, which he did; and as he underſtood that the executioner was in the next room, he deſir'd me to call him in, that he might ſpeak with him; when he came into the room and ſaw him, he wept bitterly.

The Priſoner deſir'd that he wou'd not weep for him, for he hoped it wou'd be a joyful day, and that he wou'd ſoon be in the preſence of his Lord and Saviour; he exhorted him to think of his own ſituation, for tho' he was to die this day, that *he* too muſt ſoon expect to be before the Great Tribunal, and that he ought therefore to ſeek the Lord who is both able and willing to ſhew mercy to the moſt miſerable and helpleſs ſinner: he then told him, that he had no malice nor ill-will againſt him,—That he knew it was not he who took away his life, but the law; he then fill'd a glaſs of wine and gave it to the executioner, and ſo they parted for that time.—The Miniſters then return'd; and, after a ſhort time ſpent with him, the Magiſtrates ſent notice, that they were waiting.—The executioner was then called to bind his arms; but it was ſome time before he cou'd be prevail'd upon to do it; but the Priſoner deſir'd him to do his duty.—All who were preſent, and ſaw his manly and Chriſtian behaviour, were filled with ſurpriſe, and melted into tears. We came out from the priſon a little after two o'clock,

o'clock, and from thence proceeded to the place of execution. The Miniſters who attended him, exhorted him to put his truſt wholly in the Lord, and to turn from every other refuge.——He appear'd to give attention to them: his decent behaviour filled every one with ſurpriſe, and drew tears from many.——When we arriv'd at the ſcaffold, he aſked the Miniſters, Whether he ſhould ſing or pray firſt? and being anſwer'd, That it was proper to begin with prayer, he kneeled down, and prayed with an audible voice: the ſubſtance of his prayer was like the Publican's.

He confeſs'd his own unworthineſs, and expreſs'd his truſt in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſuffer'd on the accurſed tree, that he might ſave ſuch unworthy ſinners as he was.— He begg'd forgiveneſs to all his enemies, and beſought the Lord, that he wou'd not lay his blood to the charge of any.——He alſo entreated the Lord, to bleſs this example for the good of the whole ſpectators—That he wou'd ſtrengthen him in his laſt moments, and receive him into his everlaſting kingdom.— When he aroſe from his knees, he read Pſalm cxxx. throughout, in ſuch a firm and decent manner, as aſtoniſh'd all that were near him.——We then join'd in ſinging it; after which, the Miniſters pray'd with great warmth and affection.—Joy and grief appear'd almoſt in every countenance.—The Miniſters exhorted him to hold the faith of Chriſt ſteadfaſt to the end; which he indeed appear'd to do.——I ſtood hard by him, and ſaw him look up ſteadfaſtly to the fatal tree, and then ſpake theſe words, WELCOME GIBBET! HAPPY DAY!—He then turned about, and, in a few words, exhorted the ſpectators, to take care and keep good company.——He ſpoke particularly to the ſoldiers who were about him; and after all, added, *That all wou'd be of no avail that he could ſay, for that they wou'd ſoon forget it, unleſs the Lord granted them grace; for he knew by experience, that altho' he had ſeen many ſuch examples, they were of themſelves too weak to deliver him.*—The time being near come, they aſked him, If he chuſed to pray a-

gain, or ſing? He anſwer'd, That he choſe that Pſal. xxiii. 4. to the end, ſhou'd be ſung, which he read, and we join'd in ſinging.—The Miniſters then took their leave of him; and, as the Magiſtrates who were preſent to ſee the ſentence executed, were willing to give him all the time they cou'd; they told him, He might pray, if he choſe ſecretly. When the time was near expir'd, I was deſir'd to let him know, which I did.—He then aroſe from his knees, and bade farewel to ſeveral of his fellow-ſoldiers and others, and prayed, that the Lord would bleſs us all, and that we might meet in the heavenly kingdom.—The executioner then bound his hands, and he went up the ladder.—When the executioner offer'd to take hold of his arm to lead him up, he told him, *that* was needleſs, for he cou'd go up himſelf.—When on the ladder, he gave an advice ſimilar to what he had before ſaid on the ſcaffold: Then turning himſelf to the Magiſtrates, "I hope Gentlemen, (ſaid he), you have no objection to the ſoldiers getting my body?" to which it was anſwered, No.—The rope then being fix'd, and a ſign given by the executioner, he went off gently himſelf, without any ſigns of reluctance, expreſſing theſe words, (to the beſt of my remembrance), "Lord Jeſus, receive my Spirit."—I ſtay'd to the very laſt, and ſaw him cut down; he was then put into a coffin prepar'd for him, and carried to the caſtle till next morning, when he was convey'd to the ſea, and there buried according to his own deſire.

This Sir, ends the hiſtory of William Pickworth; an account, from which, may not we—and all, be taught many important leſſons.

Conſidering *him* as dying by his crimes, may not we admire the long-ſuffering of GOD, that permits *us* to continue in the land of the living, where the living may hope for the truth.—It is true, we may not be guilty of *the groſſer* acts of robbery, blaſphemy, drunkenneſs or uncleanneſs; but, if we remember that the Lord ſearcheth the heart—if we recollect the interpretation which JESUS gives of the law, Mat. v.—if we believe

believe ourſelves enlighten'd——upon what ground can any of us ſay, "I am holier than thou?" or deem ourſelves on a different footing from him? but let not our hearts be ſet in us to do evil, becauſe ſentence is not ſpeedily executed againſt our evil works.—Let us not, if conſcious either of ſacrilegiouſly robbing GOD of his due, (Mal. iii. 8.) or of blaſphemous, covetous, impure or revengeful thoughts, ſooth ourſelves in the commiſſion of them. As GOD cannot ceaſe to be GOD.—As we cannot ceaſe to be creatures.—As juſtice and rectitude are invariable.—His law cannot be changed or diſpenſed with; and the conſequences of diſobeying it, (which are founded as much in the nature of things, as in his will), cannot be alter'd.—This is not an unneceſſary caution even to believers; even in them the power of ſelf-deceit is aſtoniſhing.—Think of David, 2 Sam. xii. 1.—6. *There were two men*, ſaid Nathan, *in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing ſave one little ew-lamb, which he had bought and nouriſhed up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his boſom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he ſpared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dreſs for the way-faring-man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dreſſed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled againſt the man, and he ſaid to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing, ſhall ſurely die. And he ſhall reſtore the lamb four-fold, becauſe he did this thing, and becauſe he had no pity.*——His anger was greatly kindled againſt the man;——*As the Lord liveth*, ſaith he, *the man that hath done this thing, ſhall ſurely die. And he ſhall reſtore the lamb four-fold.*——Think of his zeal tranſporting him even beyond mere juſtice. (Reſtitution four-fold being the fartheſt limit of legal puniſhment).——Think of him, *at that time*

guilty of the murder of Uriah——guilty of adultry with his wife, and ſtill retaining her.——Think then of the ſelf-deceit and partiality poſſible even in a believer.—Let us be fully perſuaded, that GOD will bring every work into judgement, and every ſecret thought.—Let us ſtand faſt in the faith not moved away from the hope of the goſpel.—Let us hold the truth, that begun our confidence ſteadfaſt to the end, perſuaded that thereby we ſhall not only eſcape puniſhment, but may hope for ſalvation and eternal glory.——And let theſe who are ſtruggling with ſin, and thoſe who are under its power be encourag'd, by this new diſplay of grace.—Let them be taught by it, that GOD makes no difference between the ſtricteſt and moſt formal devotee, and the vileſt reprobate, purifying their hearts by the *ſame* faith, and preaching the *ſame* peace, (which is indeed equally neceſſary) to thoſe who are far off, and to thoſe who are near."

I am, dear SIR,

Yours, &c.

THE

THE

LAST SPEECH,

CONFESSION, and DYING WORDS of WILLIAM PICKWORTH, ſoldier in the XXIId. regiment of foot, who was executed in the Graſs-market of Edinburgh, on Wedneſday the 25th of September, 1771, for the crime of Robbery, taken from his mouth in priſon, by his own particular deſire.

I Was determined once to have made no ſpeech, but being informed by ſome of my friends, that one would probably be made, and impoſed upon the Publick, I reſolved to give the following narative of my life.

I was born in *Lincoln-ſhire*, (now aged about 24 years) when I was fit to go to ſchool, my father put me to it, but I was ſo idle, that all the correction he could give me, could not make me attend to any thing, ſo that I was brought up in deep ignorance, (owing intirely to my own folly), how do I now lament, That I ſhould have deſpiſed the means of Inſtruction, in neglecting an opportunity of being taught to read the Holy Scriptures. When my father ſaw that I would not attend the ſchool, (being about ten years of age), he bound me an apprentice to a miller, whom I ſerved ſeven years, and then entered into the militia, and afterwards inliſted into the XXIId regiment of foot, from which I deſerted, but ſoon returned

returned again to my colours, and to my unſpeakable grief, then fell into bad company.

As for the Crimes for which I am now to ſuffer, I was preſent at the three robberies, *viz.* Of Meſſrs. * Ivers, Johnſton, and Herriot; I did neither ſtrike nor rob Mr. Ivers; for I paſſed by him not thinking it worth while to meddle with him; but Mills, my partner, was the principle actor in that affair. I do not ſay this to leſſen my own guilt; for I conſider myſelf as guilty *art* and *part* with him, as it was done conſiſtant with my knowledge. As to my fellow priſoner Hull, he was not with us that night, *when* Mr. Ivers was robb'd. As to the other two robberries, I confeſs I was at them both, and that I gave Mr. Herriot one ſtroke over the ſhoulders with a ſtick, and if he received any more blows, it was not from me; but I do acknowledge I was the firſt that attacked him. Mills himſelf knows the part he acted in theſe robberies: As to my other companion Hull, I am very ſorry for him, and I ſincerely wiſh that the law would reſt ſatisfied with my life for the whole. This was my earneſt requeſt that I made before the Honourable Judges upon my knees, when I received my ſentence, and I hope their Lordſhips will grant this my laſt petition.

As to Mills, I freely forgive him, for any ſtretches he made in his depoſition in my trial; for I am ſenſible, a man will do much to ſave his own life; I pray GOD, that it might not be laid to his charge, and that he might find mercy from the Lord, for that and all his other crimes.

I hope the gentlemen whom I have wrong'd, will freely forgive me; for I look back upon theſe crimes with horror, which are indeed but ſome of the outward expreſſions of that corrupt heart, *which*

* *The firſt of theſe robberies was committed in the month of December laſt, and the other two in the beginning of this year; all within about a mile and a half of the city of Edinburgh.*

is

is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. I have been living in enmity against GOD, and in dark ignorance of him, and his dear Son Jesus Christ; only using their names in oaths and curses, which now fills me with grief and sorrow.

Some people have blamed my Wife, as being instrumental in stirring me up to these robberies, and said, That she carried some watches along with her to England: These reports are false and groundless; on the contrary, she has fallen upon her knees, begging me not to go on in that course; but alas! I would not hearken to her good advices; and she has often taken the Bible and read passages to me, which pointed out the evil of my ways; so that I must take the blame wholly upon myself; for mine own hands have made the snares wherewith I am taken. When I was committing those robberies, I had great remorse and strugglings in my own mind; particularly that night Mr. Herriot was robb'd; but I was led captive by the devil and my own lusts, and was neither able nor willing to be delivered; but now I return the Lord thanks who has stopt me in my wild carreer, and has brought me into this prison; yea, and has given me cause to say, That he is a GOD rich in mercy and great in love, in that he has sent his beloved Son to die for the ungodly, and has in some measure, by his Word and Spirit opened the eyes of my understanding, to see the great salvation set before me, as a poor guilty sinner, in his death and blood shedding.

My crimes indeed are great and many, but David's plea is mine, *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquities for they are great.* The Lord has also been pleased to comfort me with such passages as these, *With the Lord there is mercy, and with HIM is plenteous redemption.—There is forgiveness with HIM that HE may be feared.—HE shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.—HE that cometh unto ME, I will in no ways cast out.—The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.—To whom Lord, shall we go? for thou hast the*

words

words of eternal life. With many other paſſages of the like nature.

The Lord has turn'd my priſon into a place of liberty, and has been graciouſly pleaſed to ſend his ſervants to comfort me, by reading and explaining the Holy Scriptures. Both miniſters and others, have been very attentive and careful, may they, and thoſe who have provided for my temporal concerns, find mercy in the time of their trouble, for GOD is not unrighteous to forget a work and labour of love.

I am ſorry that I am not able to ſay more in the praiſe of my Bleſſed Redeemer, who ſuffer'd on the croſs betwixt two thieves, ſaved one of *them*, and now, I truſt, hath ſaved *another*, and declares himſelf ready to ſave all ſuch helpleſs creatures as come unto GOD by him.—I hope very ſoon to be in his preſence, where I ſhall be fully inſtructed how to praiſe GOD and the Lamb that was ſlain. Death is now no more a terror to me, becauſe the Lord Jeſus by his death, hath taken out its ſting, who preſents his own people before the Father, in his all-perfect righteouſneſs.—Let me as a dying man, earneſtly recommend it to all parents, to inſtruct their children in the knowledge of the word of GOD, at leaſt, by teaching them to read it; and I do moſt heartily intreat all perſons come to age, to ſearch the ſcriptures, for the Pearl of Great Price, is only to be found in them.—Be admoniſhed by my example; ſeek the Lord while he may be found.—Dont preſume, becauſe God has ſhewed me Mercy, dont ſin that Grace may abound.

I leave my poor lamenting Widow, to the care and protection of that Lord, to whom I have committed my own Soul; and, I pray, That all my friends may be benefited by this Providence.—I admire the ſteps of Providence, that I am to ſuffer in this kingdom, where (according to the law of the country) time is given both before and after ſentence; had I been permitted to commit theſe crimes in my native country, I might have been brought to the gallows without an opportunity of hearing the glad-tidings of Salvation.—(I

make

make no doubt, but the Lord will ſave his own people in every nation); But, O! how happy a privilege it is, to have an opportunity of hearing the Holy Scriptures, wherein the way of Salvation is clearly pointed forth; as alſo, our natural ſtate and condition before God. I have mentioned this, that you may ſee the great goodneſs of God, that he has followed me, altho' I have been running from him. I acknowledge, that I had a notable temptation to begin this evil courſe in my native country, but was prevented and eſcaped the ſnare, until that night in which David Ivers was robb'd by Mills, whereunto I conſented, and then began that evil courſe. —*O Lord! unſearchable are thy ways!*

I have related this, that all may ſee the goodneſs and kindneſs of GOD toward me. I was not ſuffer'd to begin that evil courſe, till the night when in company with Mills, Mr Ivers was robb'd. I bleſs GOD, for the opportunity I have had of hearing the ſcriptures of truth, wherein is ſet forth the ſtate of man by nature; and alſo, the great and only remedy which GOD has provided for helpleſs ſinners: Theſe, I truſt he has been graciouſly pleaſed to reveal to me by his Holy Spirit, and to make my houſe of Priſon, a houſe of Joy. —Into thy hands, O Jeſus, I reſign my ſpirit, to enter into the full enjoyment of thine unſearchable riches. Amen.

WILLIAM PICKWORTH.

N. B. With reſpect to the Paper that has been ſold, call'd, *Groans from the Dungeon*, I would have it known, that it was written and publiſhed without my conſent and knowledge.—With regard to the verſe, *Tears mingled with thy blood can waſh me ſo*; I abhor the thonght; I renounce my tears, my groans, my prayers, my all, and truſt alone to the blood of Jeſus to waſh me, *and make my ſcarlet ſins as white as ſnow.*

POSTSCRIPT.

I Am very ſorry to learn that a wrong apprehenſion, and a moſt miſrepreſented account of ſome things I ſaid to the Priſoner on Pſalm 51ſt, have been the occaſion of offence to ſome of theſe who heard me, and of thoſe to whom it has been reported.

I ſuppoſe few people who know me, will very eaſily believe, that I apply'd the whole of that Pſalm to Jeſus Chriſt —Far be from me, the blaſphemous thought! that *he*, holy—harmleſs—undefiled, and ſeparate from ſinners, was ſhapen in ſin and conceived in iniquity.—But, to vindicate myſelf, (which is it ſeems neceſſary), I ſhall not only diſclaim what I did not ſay; but, endeavour to recollect and inform you of what I did.—Having heard ideas thrown out on a part of that Pſalm—*which appear'd to me*, to reſt the weight of David's comfort and hope, on the truth, and wiſdom of his inward parts, and on the contrition and brokenneſs of his heart, preferr'd by him to the ſacrifices of the law.—I cou'd not help thinking, (altho' I approved of ſome things ſaid by that perſon), that *that* was by no means warranted, either by the hiſtory of the tranſaction, or any other part of Scripture; but on the contrary, was moſt certainly contradicted by both.—For theſe reaſons, and from no love to controverſy for its own ſake, I thought it proper, (after the perſon had ſpoken), to repreſent what occur'd to me on theſe heads,— (Deſirous that nothing might be heard by the poor Priſoner, that had any tendency to beget, or to cheriſh in him, groundleſs fears, or deluſive hopes.)— I ſaid, That this Pſalm was penn'd, after Nathan had not only declared to David his guilt in the matter of Bath-ſheba and Uriah; *but had revealed to him the Lord's remiſſion of it*, 2 Sam. xii.—Conſequently, that in whatever ſenſe a broken and contrite heart is here mentioned, as *the ſacrifice of the Lord*, it cou'd not be term'd ſuch, as having any aſpect *to the remiſſion of his guilt*.—Indeed it appears, that David previous

previous to the Prophet's intimation of his ſin, and the forgiveneſs of it, was very far removed from brokenneſs of heart on that account.

And at any rate, that the only ſacrifice well-pleaſing to GOD *in that view*, was the perfect offering of his own Son, in whoſe heart was indeed the law of GOD, and who fulfilled his will.—I added, That in him cou'd only be found *in perfection* the broken and contrite heart, which the Lord wou'd not deſpiſe; and that it was probable, that David's eye was led forward to *him* in this Pſalm.—For as it did not appear that any ſacrifices were ordered to be offered for murder and adultery——and conſequently for that reaſon, GOD did not deſire or delight in them; ſo the connection of the very ſame words, or ſimilar ones elſewhere, ſeem'd to me to point out the ſame truth, which by the application of Pſal. xl. is eſtabliſhed, Heb. x. 5.—Iſa. lvii. 15. chap. lxvi. 1, &c. with the end of chap. lxv.; Pſal. lxix. 29—33.* The reference of Stephen to Iſaiah lxvi.; Acts vii. 49. and of James

But I am poor and ſorrowful: let thy ſalvation, O God, ſet me up on high. I will praiſe the name of GOD with a ſong, and will magnify him with thankſgiving. This alſo ſhall pleaſe the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs. The humble ſhall ſee this, and be glad: and your heart ſhall live that ſeek GOD. It appears from the foregoing part of this Pſalm, which in part is applied by our Lord to himſelf, and from another part, applied by the apoſtle Peter to Judas, that this Pſalm ſets forth the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, who was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death, in that night wherein he was betrayd; and that the pouring out of his ſoul unto death, was that ſacrifice well-pleaſing unto GOD, when the offering of theſe bullocks and ſlain beaſts was ſet aſide, as inſufficient to purge the conſcience from the guilt of ſin; they only being a ſhadow of this good thing to come. And that the humbled ones, who are brought to the knowledge of this truth, live in the ſight of GOD in the belief thereof, agreeable to Pſal. xxii. 26.

Acts

Acts xv. 16.; to a paſſage very ſimilar to verſe 18th; ſeem to found me in this.

The works of the believers of this ſacrifice, are indeed honoured in ſcripture with the ſame name; but that can be apply'd to them only from their reſemblance to it.——And it *is* apply'd to them in the very ſame place, where the truth concerning *it* is alſo aſſerted, and uſed indeed as an argument for them, Rom. xii. 1. *I beſeech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye preſent your bodies a living ſacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reaſonable ſervice*, Heb. xiii. 12, 15. *Wherefore Jeſus alſo, that he might ſanctify the people with his own blood, ſuffered without the gate. By him therefore let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name, &c.* 1 Pet. ii. 5. *Ye alſo as lively ſtones, are built up a ſpiritual houſe, an holy prieſthood to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to GOD by Jeſus Chriſt.*

This Sir, is very briefly, (ſo well as I can remember), the ſubſtance of what I ſaid, and from it, you may be able to judge how reaſonable and candid was the inference drawn from it.

Let it not however be imagined, from what I have ſaid, that I think repentance, contrition, &c. unneceſſary; on the contrary, I am perſuaded, that every one that beholds the glory of the Saviour, who humbled himſelf unto death, will be brought to ſubmit to him, to abhor themſelves in duſt and aſhes; and to ſee, that it is inconſiſtent with the faith of the goſpel to continue in pride. (Conformity to Chriſt being the priviledge of the people, juſtified and ſanctified by his blood) But, none of them will be left to truſt to any thing of their own for *acceptance*; for the righteous nation who keep the truth, derive all their life, and joy, and peace, from him who *engaged his heart to approach* to his righteous Father in their room. And, whoever reſts on any other foundation but this, which GOD hath laid in Zion, will find when too late, that the hail will ſweep away all their refuges of lies.

FINIS.

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